



SOUTHAMPTON  
UNIVERSITY LIBRARY

BOOK NUMBER	59-680503
CLASS MARK	SF 376
	Perkins





The Improvement of British Fine  
Wool, and the Arable System  
of Sheep Husbandry

---

J.K. Trimmer

---

1828

---

P.A.L.

PERKINS  
AGRICULTURAL LIBRARY

---

UNIVERSITY COLLEGE  
SOUTHAMPTON



TILLING, PRINTER, CHELSEA.



vations in the form in which they had already appeared, and to continue the remainder in the same manner they had, in part, been prepared in.

After coming to this resolution, I was induced to enlarge still more upon them, being anxious to give utterance to the whole of those reflections which had long weighed upon my mind on the subject.

This last manner of publication, however, now that the parts are collected into one focus, exhibits much redundance of sentiment and expression, since, in the disjointed way which some had been given in, I had found it necessary, after the first, to begin each address with a summary of the prior one, least the reader should not have seen the former. For this I hope I need offer no excuse, but the statement I am giving.

In executing my design, throughout these observations, I have endeavoured to point out to the practical man the minute particulars to be attended to, in case any deem the course I have recommended worth pursuing.



I can truly say that I have often sat down to the task, amidst the toils of business, weary in body and mind, and that very many of the hours which have been devoted to the consideration of the subject have been those in which I have deprived myself of natural rest.

This, I know, can furnish no plea for the want of soundness in the matter itself, for that should be duly weighed and digested, or not intruded on public notice, and it must therefore stand or fall on its own merits; but I hope it may afford some excuse for the deficiency in better arrangement and expression of my sentiments.

## CONTENTS.

---

### CHAPTER I.

	Page
General remarks on the improvement of fine wool on the Continent and in Great Britain, with some observations on the Saxon and Merino breeds of sheep .....	1

### CHAPTER II.

Enlargement of the former remarks, with observations on the application of sheep to arable husbandry, and the state of the British flocks, with the means of improve- ment .....	8
---	---

### CHAPTER III.

Continuation of the former remarks, with particulars more minutely descriptive of the advantages incident to the use of Merino sheep in the British flocks. ....	20
--	----

## CHAPTER IV.

	Page
Sketch, descriptive of the French flocks, and the shepherding of them; with a particular description of the Royal Merino flock of Rambouillet.....	34

## CHAPTER V.

Particulars of the French arable husbandry, and the economy of sheep, as practised in their system; a comparison drawn with that of Great Britain; together with a full account of the Author's application of his Merino flock to arable husbandry. ....	51
---	----

## CHAPTER VI.

Conclusion: with a summary of the great advantages arising from the sheep husbandry; and general reflections on the question in a National point of view.	73
---	----

## PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS,

&c.

---

IT is impossible that any person can have even glanced over the mass of evidence given before the Committee of the House of Lords, without being forcibly struck with the awful fact, that this country, which once boasted of its native wool as the staple commodity—clothing with it not only its own population, but supplying also other nations largely with cloth manufactured from it—has now become nearly wholly dependent on a supply of foreign wool for its clothing manufacture. In this volume of evidence, it is stated, on one hand, by the manufacturers, that British fine wool has greatly degenerated, whilst, on the other, this is denied by the growers of it; but as both agree in one point, that from the introduction of softer German wools, the habits and taste of consumers of cloth at home and abroad are changed, it is





Leading breeders of sheep had a great stake in the flocks which they already possessed; they had given and were obtaining high prices for them, and they were also accustomed to look to particular points in them as those nearest to perfection. The Merino sheep, on their introduction, differed materially from such popular points; and it is not to be wondered at, under such circumstances, that they were decried. It was said that they were neither suited to the climate nor the fold, unkindly in their disposition, that the mutton was worthless, and that the wool would and did degenerate. Practical breeders of eminence, who made any trials of them, being thus warped by prejudice and interest, those trials consequently were not pursued with zeal; and the sheep were not adapted to the taste of the shepherds, who were accustomed to view a different kind of animal. They were therefore without a fair chance of success. Unfortunately, too, many of them fell into the hands of other than practical men, and from mismanagement a colour was given to the clamour raised against them. Wool from inferior and mixed flocks of all kinds was attempted to be passed as the best and most pure; manufacturers could only judge from the quality which they found it to possess, and they therefore considered the wool did degenerate. Rams,







it. I also lament that the limits of a communication of this kind will not permit me to go more into detail; but if any one who feels a true interest in the matter will write to me, postage free, I will readily answer his inquiries.

---

## SECOND OBSERVATIONS.

THE observations which I recently published on this subject, having met with a very favourable reception, and led to a desire from some persons that I should enlarge upon them, I am induced to do it, trusting that those which I am about to offer will receive the same candid consideration.

In my late Address I stated it as my full conviction, arising from experience, that fine wool could as well be grown in this as in any country, and I also gave a brief sketch of the means pursued in refining the Saxon wools; contrasting the spread of improvement between the German and British clothing wools; and I likewise pointed out how greatly the temporary interests and strong prejudices of individuals had tended to keep back British wool from its due share in the improvement.













and sell from year to year, are governed in the choice by that only which will yield the most profit; and if a variety of sheep, in consequence of defect in its wool, can be purchased at so reduced a rate as still to yield them a profit, their temporary interests may be served whilst the breeders from that reduction in price must suffer. The true interest of the latter is to look beyond the immediate moment, and possess a flock inheriting such a combination of good properties as may render it in the end of sterling value.

The different soils and various breeds of sheep in this country, with proper attention and improvement, are happily suited to the wants of man in food and clothing. The rich grazing grounds to feed the large long-woolled breeds of sheep for a supply of the coarser and heavier mutton and wool, whilst the middle and upland soils, which constitute by far the greatest portion of the lands, are adapted to the growth of short wools and fine-grained mutton; and the best state of agriculture can only be sustained on such lands by the use of the sheep fold. A great quantity of short wool must thus necessarily be grown, and, as it is in vain to strive against the stream, and unprofitably to produce that for which there is no demand, it is important that this wool should be of a quality to meet the

purpose for which there is the greatest consumption. If the breeders in general of Southdown sheep were to endeavour to restore the degenerate flocks merely by the use of rams of the best of that kind, the progress would not only be extremely slow, but they would, perhaps, scarcely ever arrive at the point from which they had descended. The quickest and only means of accomplishing improvement, even very much beyond that given point, is by the use of such rams as inherit a very superior and the highest quality of wool, if that wool be produced without artificial means, and I have before shown that the greatest advantages which have taken place in fine wool have originated in the Merino sheep, and that those, in an improved state, are well adapted for the growth of mutton and use in the fold. I can now neither expect space to be allotted to so protracted an article as it would make, nor would I encumber this address with all the calculations relative to the advantages incident to the use of them in British flocks; but, if needful, as I probably shall find it, I will make it the subject of a future article. I will, however, here answer one prejudice existing among Southdown breeders against the use of Merinos, which is the dread that the former will thus lose the character of black faces and legs. This, in itself, would be a great advan-

tage, since I never yet conversed with an intelligent manufacturer who did not say that the body of the fleece, in some degree, partook of those black hairs, which lessened the value of the wool for the manufacture of articles of light colour, as such black hairs will not take the dye in the same manner as white wool does. The question, in my opinion, now is within very narrow compass. Whatever aid the Legislature may or may not deem it right to afford in the matter, that must remain for determination to another year; but the breeding season is now at hand, and it is for the flock-masters promptly to determine whether they will, or will not, without loss of another year, begin improvement in the wool. That those who do first and vigorously set about it will be the greatest gainers, I feel the most confident assurance; and if none do, the growing of clothing wool in this country, as I have already said, will become extinct. I have heard and read much of speculative advantages likely to arise from deriving it elsewhere; but I have never yet met with any thing in the least convincing to me, that, in every point of view, it is not most profitable, and of the greatest national advantage, that the British isles should, as heretofore, grow as much as possible of clothing wool, rather than depend on a foreign supply of it from any country whatever.

If, without the charge of egotism, I may be allowed once more to refer to the successful improvement which has taken place in my own flock, I will state two circumstances which have occurred since I last offered some observations on the subject, and I trust that I may so refer to it with confidence, since on reading the reported evidence, I find how very great a difference of price the wool of it has supported above that of any other British Merino wool. One of the incidents which I allude to is, that the fleeces of a select flock of Saxon sheep have recently been sold by public auction, and under circumstances which excited considerable interest, and after every abatement necessary for some difference in the deficiency of cleanness, those fleeces, which only weighed half the weight of mine, they sold at a rate considerably below the whole from my flock.

The other circumstance is, that the Van Diemen's Land Company, not from any suggestion of mine (for I was ignorant of any such intention till the matter was concluded), but after the most full inquiry and consideration, and at the recommendation and ample investigation of competent persons, who were well acquainted with the Saxon flocks and mine also, have determined on the use of some of my rams for their Merino sheep, in preference to the Saxon rams.

































































































































THE HISTORY OF THE  
CITY OF BOSTON  
FROM 1630 TO 1800  
IN TWO VOLUMES  
BY  
JOHN H. COLEMAN  
OF THE  
CITY OF BOSTON

1800

PERMANENT